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Reward Programs Supporting Environmental Organizational Policy

Employers increasingly take steps to create sustainable development through appropriate human resource practices and tools. This is called Green Human Resource Management (Green HRM). Practices that create sustainability are used in all functional areas of Human Resource Management (HRM). However, employee rewarding is crucial, as it supports the pro-ecological behaviors of employees. Despite the essential nature of this issue, few Polish publications explore it. The aim of this article is to draw attention to the need of creating sustainable reward systems for employees as well as to define the sustainable rewards. Here, systematization of the concept of sustainable rewards and the classification of motivational programs supporting pro-ecological activities are carried out on the basis of topical literature. Good examples from management practice in this area are also indicated.

Key words: green incentive and compensation programs, sustainable reward systems, responsible rewarding

Introduction

A concern for the environment has been with Man since the beginning of time. Industrialization and globalization show, however, that the responsibility for sustainable development belongs to Man who has only recently become aware of the great impact that his actions have on Mother Earth. Globalization and industrialization have caused changes in the natural environment and continue to affect its degradation. Nevertheless, the development of modern technologies creates opportunities to change technological processes and move away from methods that are particularly problematic in the case of environmentally-friendly solutions. The rise of public

opinion—consumer protests, strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts—show that environmental awareness is growing. Since the 1970s, the business community has also recognized ecological values. A need for green management has sprouted as a result of not only public opinion, but also as a response to the demands of saving raw materials and reducing costs.

Green Management, Pro-ecological Management, and Environmental Management are constantly being encountered in management practice (Ahmad, 2015). Concepts based on the circular economy, such as the closed-loop supply chain, facilitate a rethinking of the way in which an organization's resources are understood (Michniewska, 2011), including Human Resources. Environmental management is not only about politics and programs. It is also about attitudes, motives, and concerns. This is why there is an increase in employer sustainable development activities through the introduction of appropriate practices and tools in the area of Human Resource Management (Pocztowski, 2016; Renwick et al., 2012).

The concept of Green Human Resources indicates that managing people can help achieve green management by raising employee awareness and shaping desirable behaviors (see Jackson et al., 2013; Pocztowski, 2016). Communicating important information and building employee engagement plays a key role in implementing and developing a sustainable development strategy. According to the CIPD study, HR professionals believe that they should actively support the organization in pro-ecological activities (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 36).

Employer awareness of their role in shaping individual employee attitudes that will translate into comparable behavior outside the workplace is an important aspect indicated when stating reasons for interest in green practices. In the literature, attention is also paid to a holistic view of employees in the context of shaping environmental behaviors—employees are those who fulfill their job responsibilities in the workplace and at the same time are consumers in private life. Such an approach to shaping pro-ecological behavior in both the workplace and in private life is called Green Work-Life Balance (Muster and Schrader, 2011). It signifies that organizations offer incentive programs supporting both the pro-ecological behaviors at work while educating and increasing the awareness of employees to help them effectively reduce their negative environmental footprint. Human Resource practices may strengthen the motivation and involvement of employees in shaping a green organizational culture, introducing eco-innovations, and even reducing negative impact (e.g., by monitoring relevant indicators) on the environment. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to draw attention to the need for creating sustainable reward systems that support the achievement of both economic objectives and social as well as environmental ones. Based on the literature, this paper provides a systemati-

zation of the concept of sustainable rewards, classifies the various types of motivation programs that support pro-ecological activities, and examines the context and implications for the human resource policy.

Green HRM as an Element of Sustainable HRM

Green HRM is a part of a broader context of Sustainable Human Resource Management, which is not a new concept in topical literature. In 2002, Thom and Zaug introduced the concept of *Sustainable HRM* in relation to the processes of acquiring, developing, retaining, and dismissing employees that require an effective responsible and economically approach. Such an approach represents a broader perspective of thinking that takes into account not only the success of the organization, but also the overall development of people within the organization. Referring to the sustainability definition presented by the Brundtland Commission, the authors state that sustainable HRM procedures and practices should be targeted to achieve current goals without compromising the ability to achieve the goals of future generations (Thom and Zaug, 2002; Brundtland Commission, 1987). Poczowski points out that Sustainable HRM means, “creating economic, environmental and social value in business processes with respect to HRM policies and practices” (Poczowski, 2016, pp. 304–305). Therefore, Sustainable HRM is aimed at balancing economic, social, and environmental performance (Epstein, 2008). This means focusing on the harmonious development of the organization and undertaking actions that “do not harm” or limit the negative impact in these three areas. By shaping a sustainable human resource management system, it is possible to reduce the negative effects that HR practices have on employee lives (e.g., high workloads, stress, and work–life imbalance), providing a supportive work environment (e.g., developing supportive relationships, promoting collaboration, and building a culture of trust), increasing employability level (e.g., development programs), and balancing the quality of work, life, and organizational performance (Borkowska, 2006; Docherty et al., 2002; Ehnert, 2008).

The ecological dimension of Sustainable Human Resource Management is least discussed and investigated in topical literature (Poczowski, 2016, p. 306). According to this literature, Green HRM has two main research streams: analysis of environmentally–friendly HRM practices and the creation of human capital (Dutta, 2012). Green HRM in the practice of people responsible for managing justifies the implementation of actions supporting pro–environmental policy, including building employee involvement in environmental issues, creating what is termed as green teams, training in the field of environmental protection, and building green leadership. The distinctive feature of Green HRM is the development of a low–level

formalized organizational culture that integrates ecological issues into traditional HRM practices (Pocztowski, 2016; Jabbour, 2011).

Green HRM is designed to help the employee identify with the organization's environmental goals. This results in stronger involvement in supporting the organization's policy and its implementation in the professional context. Research shows that not only positive emotions (such as pride or prestige) play a role in implementing pro-environmental policies. A sense of shame resulting from the environmentally damaging actions of the organization also contributes to decisions made by management on changing environmental policy (Onkila, 2015). These examples show that internal identification and motivation play a key role in building employee engagement in promoting green policies. On the other hand, there is the question of how much employers can support "green motivation" through properly targeted incentive programs. Literature as well as management practice provides many examples of programs and solutions within the reward system that promote pro-environmental behaviors. These activities are directed toward both executives and lower level managers. Such programs are also diversified depending on the sector, industry, type of influence that the organization has on its environment, and the role of the employee within the organization (Klimkiewicz, 2017). The concept of sustainable and responsible rewards will be presented in the following section, with particular emphasis on programs aimed at promoting pro-environmental employee behaviors.

Sustainable Rewards in Organizations

The sustainable motivating and rewarding of employees—a part of Sustainable HRM—is a relatively new issue in literature on the subject. However, its various aspects have long been reflected in the discourse of management sciences (e.g., aspects of social justice or respect for human rights and dignity). Nevertheless, the idea of reward and motivation systems in relation to sustainable development and the social responsibility of organizations has developed only recently (Moxey, 2016; Klimkiewicz, Beck-Krala, 2015; Sahakiants, Festing, and Steger, 2015). The exploration of this issue concerns aspects such as those related to the promotion of socially responsible attitudes and behaviors of employees through incentive programs (Sahakiants, Festing, and Steger, 2015), including the highest level of management (Linder and Mottis, 2013; Beck-Krala et al., in print), and a broader view of evaluating the effectiveness of reward systems (Beck-Krala and Klimkiewicz, 2016; Beck-Krala, 2017). Klimkiewicz and Beck-Krala (2015) point out that reward systems function in a broader institutional context. This is what determines their role and perception. Responsible rewarding systems not only maintain economic efficiency

(profit-oriented) and effectiveness (goal-oriented), but are also responsible by their very nature (Beck–Krala, 2017). Responsible Rewarding is just “such a selection of rewarding strategies, process design, rewards, procedures and tools that take into account human subjectivity in the organization in a holistic way and creates favorable conditions for further sustainable development of the organization and its main stakeholders” (Klimkiewicz and Beck –Krala, 2015, p. 75). This harmonious development is considered in a long term and concerns the triple bottom line—i.e. the application of solutions that are socially responsible, ecologically friendly, and economically valuable at the same time (Rok, 2004). In this sense, sustainable rewarding is aimed at supporting the implementation of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. Similarly, when conducting socially responsible business, it should take into account (Beck–Krala, 2017):

- The long-term perspective for the development of the organization and its stakeholders,
- Applicable legal norms,
- Applicable moral and ethical standards,
- Provide personalized treatment of employees, and
- Be consistent with the business strategy and support the remaining elements of the HRM System.

Figure No. 1. Different Orientations of Motivation Programs



Source: Own study.

Sustainable Reward Systems include motivational programs that, in addition to incentive, target three main areas: economic, social, and environmental. The following list shows various types of motivation programs (see Figure No. 1):

- Traditional motivation programs based on the achievement of economic objectives, such as bonus programs or rewards based on financial performance. Measurement criteria used in such programs are usually quantitative (e.g., sales value or production quantities).

- Motivation programs focused on building relationships with employees are strongly oriented toward the needs of those employees. Such programs motivate not only in achieving financial goals, but also improve employee well-being, increase employee and community safety, etc. Some examples of such programs are reward programs based on competencies, cafeteria programs, and bonuses, including qualitative evaluation criteria such as customer service quality and employee development.

- Green motivation programs or pro-environmental incentive programs are primarily aimed at reducing the negative impact of the organization and its people on the environment. Such programs are focused at strengthening and creating attitudes and behaviors that support pro-ecological activities. Examples include programs aimed at reducing pollution, reducing water and energy consumption in the workplace, etc.

- Motivation support programs that are targeted at the achievement of social or environmental goals, but do not have a direct link to financial motivation. Examples include employee volunteer programs or knowledge sharing.

Sustainable Reward Systems cover programs from all three areas. Examples of these are incentive programs created with the use of a balanced scorecard that takes into account ecological and social criteria in all areas of the card—financial, customer, internal process, and development. By selecting appropriate practices and incentive programs from different areas, organizations can diversify and balance the range of motivational solutions.

Classification of Green Reward Programs

In the literature of the subject there is no systematization of Green Reward Programs. Renwick et al. (2012) cite examples of motivation and compensation programs applied to employees in the field of sustainable development. They do not provide any classification, however. In their turn, Jackson et al. (2011) provide a general classification of such programs by proposing:

- Incentive programs that reward the pro-ecological behavior of employees,
- Incentive programs for eco-innovations, and
- Programs that educate and support pro-ecological activities in private life.

Green Reward Programs can be subdivided into financial and non-financial programs, individual and team oriented programs, formal and informal programs, programs addressed to managers and employees, and programs targeting internal and external stakeholders (Table No. 1).

Financial Green Reward Programs include raises, bonuses, and prizes contingent on the achievement of environmental criteria and objectives, including the reduction of the negative impact of an organization on the environment. These programs may be linked to an organization's strategic objectives or stem directly from an organization's CSR strategy. They are usually addressed to a narrow group of stakeholders, such as managers of all levels and employees. Looking at the popularity of the use of green financial reward programs, there is an increase in linking manager compensation with pro-environmental goals from 15% in 2012 up to 24% in 2014 (McCullough, 2014).

Green non-financial programs have tremendous potential in motivating employees (Renwick et al., 2012). Due to the wide range of the impact of these programs and the various groups of stakeholders they are addressed to, they can also be divided into those targeted at internal stakeholders motivating employees to take action (supporting ecological actions on the job and in the workplace) and at external stakeholders (supporting ecological actions outside the workplace). Most financial programs are directed toward "inside the organization." They link employee bonuses and raises with the achievement of ecological goals and are closely connected with an organization's activity—e.g., reducing the amount of resources used for production or work. However, most non-financial programs are directed outside the organization. They can realize important objectives of the local community. Giving employees the opportunity to undertake ecological projects during work time can be treated as financing the work time pool dedicated for this purpose (Renwick et al., 2012). An employee has the opportunity to realize his or her own ecological ideas and develop skills based on the organization's infrastructure. This benefit can be considered a part of a balanced incentive system (see Figure No. 1; Jackson, et al., 2011) that focuses on employee motivation and engagement and binds the employee to the organization, while at the same time enables the employee to accomplish his or her own goals and passion thanks to funding by the employer. However, such an understanding of reward programs goes beyond the traditional understanding of compensation systems (Beck-Krala, 2017, p. 143).

Table No. 1. Classification of Green Reward Programs.

Green Financial Reward Programs	Examples of Good Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pay increases dependent on environmental performance, ■ Individual and team incentives based on environmental performance—achieving ecological criteria, such as ecology innovation programs—and providing environmental benefits to employees—e.g, water and electricity reduction programs in the workplace and greater use of recycling and reuse of paper in the workplace, ■ Individual and team financial bonuses for actions taken and achievements made in the field of environmental protection, ■ Financial awards for team and individual suggestions and solutions that significantly reduce the organization’s negative impact on the environment (eco–innovations), ■ Incentive programs rewarding the development of employee green skills—e.g, knowledge of environmental legislation in the industry, and ■ Long–term incentives that link executive compensation with the achievement of environmental goals. 	<p>Intel Corporation (IT), where each employee’s remuneration is linked to ecological criteria. Alcoa, an aluminum company whose employees earn a bonus based on green carbon reduction targets as well as improving safety at work (McCullough, 2014).</p> <p>In Chevron’s energy group, as in GlaxoSmith–Kline, the pharmaceutical company, employee compensation is bound up with reduced use of resources and reduced environmental impact fostering financial savings, improved work processes, and reduced resource consumption (Brammer, Hojmosse, and Millington, 2015).</p> <p>The Eko–Innovation group programs are available at Xerox (called Earth Awards).</p> <p>Incentive and bonus program for employee green suggestions and exceptional achievements in this area can be found at Dow Chemical and ICI Americas, (Arulrajah et al., 2015).</p>
Green Non–financial Reward Programs	Examples of Good Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Green benefits – Additional benefits offered to employees in order to protect the environment, which can be linked to transportation, for example, ■ Benefits that support socially responsible behavior and environmental attitudes not directly related to environmental protection, ■ Non–financial employee recognition programs for environmental initiatives, and ■ A timeframe for pro–environmental action/ ecological projects. Paid–for–working time during which employees voluntarily engage in green initiatives, aimed at increasing employee motivation and engagement. Projects implemented in this way may be assigned by leaders or be based on employee initiatives. 	<p>The financing of public transportation for employees, covering the costs of renting cars by the hour, financing a bicycle service or purchasing bicycles for employees, and subsidizing the purchase of electric cars. FMC Polska SA, an IT company, provides employees with green transportation services (e.g, bicycles). UBS, a financial institution, provides employees with additional free parking space when more people come to work together in a one car.</p> <p>Among green benefits, there are also flexible working time programs applied by many employers—e.g, work from home potentially reducing an employee’s negative environmental impact through the non–use of transportation.</p> <p>Non–financial recognition programs rewarding employees for pro–ecological activities with material prizes, such as paid extra free time, publicity, certificates and statues, daily praise, and dinners.</p>

Source: Own study.

A company's characteristics determine initiatives as well as adopted incentive and remuneration programs. Many companies operating in an extremely difficult environment work to improve and protect the environment, including through the scope of reward programs.

The Influence of "Green Motivation"

The reasons for the implementing of Green HRM may vary. On the one hand, HR supports an organization's strategic goals in this area. On the other hand, it enables the development of responsible employer branding. Statistical data collected by organizations in Poland show that these actions are mainly taken up by the desire of companies to improve their image and obtain the ensuing financial benefits ("Report: Business and Ecology," 2011). The research reported in the document shows that targeted efforts in the field of Green HRM, such as improving employee relations and shaping employee attitudes and awareness of environmental protection, are in ninth position. In their turn, employee motivation and engagement are listed among the benefits of a company's green initiatives and already find themselves in fifth position ("Report: Business and Ecology," 2011). This shows that changing the attitudes of employees and increasing their involvement may be an unintended consequence of pro-environmental policies.

One of the greatest benefits of providing green reward programs is to build employee engagement. From the HRM Harvard Model's point of view, the integration of the interests of many stakeholders constitutes the basis for high employee engagement (Beer and Eisenstat, 2009). Socially responsible employer actions in the area of environmental protection support a sense of material safety among employees and safety in the workplace (e.g., healthy working conditions and secure pay at a decent level). An employer's strong commitment to CSR shows employees how their employer deals with stakeholders, which has implications for employer behavior towards employees (Baumann and Skitka, 2012).

However, the benefits achieved in the psychological dimension can be much more important. Literature points to promoting employee self-confidence, respect for diversity in the workplace, and building a sense of belonging to a group where values are respected. As a consequence, the number of counterproductive employee behaviors that result from a lack of loyalty to the employer and coworkers is often diminished. Environmental and local community action gives employees a sense of authenticity and a sense of accomplishment (Bauman and Skitka, 2012). For their part, CSR activities have a positive influence on the image of the employer by providing a sense of pride in work for a socially responsible company.

Opportunities and Threats Related to Green Reward Systems

More and more companies are developing reward systems that support eco–friendly actions on the part of employees. Studies conducted in Denmark show that incentive programs that combine employee participation and environmental advocacy within organizations are extremely effective. The introduction of financial bonuses has resulted in an increase in the participation of employees in green initiatives when they were given the opportunity to perform such activities during working hours (Forman and Jorgensen, 2001). Berrone and Gomez–Mejia conducted one of the first studies on green incentives and employee remuneration. Research conducted in 465 companies operating in particularly harmful environmental sectors has shown that more environmentally–friendly companies pay higher compensation to executives than those that were not environmentally friendly. In addition, studies have shown that the long–term performance of companies linked to remuneration leads to a reduction in environmental pollution and gives greater scope to the prevention of pollution (Berrone and Gomez–Mejia, 2009). However, there are skeptical voices as well. The CERES and Sustainalitics study shows that although more and more organizations are introducing reward management programs that incorporate environmental indicators, corporate governance often neglects real environmental actions (CERES and Sustainalitics 2014). Literature indicates that bonuses encourage executives to analyze indicators and work mainly within the bounds of short–term performance (Benz and Frey, 2007; Denis et al., 2006). Moreover, the temptation to abuse that stems from the Agency Problem can cause managers to pursue goals by maximizing their individual goals rather than the goals of the organization. Coombs and Gilley argue that the negative relation between managerial compensation and green policies may be due to the fact that such an approach may reduce the amount of rewards that managers receive for achieving their financial goals (Coombs and Gilley, 2005).

Conclusions

Developing a sustainable management concept requires a comprehensive approach and the incorporation of a sustainable development strategy into all Human Resource Management aspects. Such actions must pursue economic, social, and environmental goals. The system of employee rewards is an important factor in green HRM. Although literature addressing this issue is rather scarce, it does contain some tips for shaping reward programs that support socially responsible behavior. This article highlights the main assumptions of the Sustainable Rewarding System,

classifies applied incentive programs, and indicates good practices in this area. The issue of Green Reward Programs is relatively new in the discourse of management science and requires further exploration. It seems important to develop an awareness and understanding of the role that HR managers play in shaping socially responsible behaviors and attitudes as well as identify the most effective programs that support such attitudes. The fact remains that research in this area is not clear. Another study that might prove interesting should also examine the effectiveness of these activities in different dimensions and measure the social impact of the programs on the environment.

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Programy motywacyjne wspierające prośrodowiskową politykę organizacji

Streszczenie

Pracodawcy coraz częściej podejmują działania zmierzające do kreowania zrównoważonego rozwoju poprzez odpowiednie praktyki i narzędzia w obszarze zarządzania ludźmi, nazywane *Green Human Resources Management* (Renwick i wsp., 2012). Praktyki kreujące zrównoważony rozwój stosowane są we wszystkich obszarach funkcjonalnych zarządzania ludźmi, jednak kluczową rolę odgrywa tu motywowanie i wynagradzanie pracowników, ponieważ wspiera proekologiczne zachowania pracowników. Mimo istotności zagadnienia niewiele polskich publikacji porusza tę problematykę.

Celem artykułu jest omówienie potrzeby kreowania zrównoważonych systemów wynagradzania pracowników oraz próba zdefiniowania zrównoważonego wynagradzania. Na bazie literatury przedmiotu przeprowadzono systematyzację pojęcia zrównoważonego wynagradzania oraz klasyfikację występujących w praktyce programów motywacyjnych, wspierających działania proekologiczne. Wskazano również dobre praktyki stosowane w praktyce zarządzania w tym obszarze.

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